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DE RUEHCH #1284/01 2961455
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FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5825
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 001284

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2017
TAGS: [KCFE](#) [OSCE](#) [PARM](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: MINISTER SOVA INSISTS PLAN NEEDS CLEAR DEADLINES

REF: A: CHISINAU 1273

Classified By: Ambassador Michael D. Kirby for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Minister for Reintegration Sova welcomed and supported EUR DAS Kramer's outlines of the three-point proposal presented in Moscow, which looks at Transnistria in the context of the CFE treaty, but said clear timelines must be established. Sova proposed limiting to one year the transfer period from peacekeeping forces to civilian observers. Sova questioned the idea of destroying all Russian munitions on site, because a lot of this material could more easily be removed to Russia. On-site destruction could take years and lead to footdragging. Sova proposed also imposing a deadline guaranteeing that the process of removing munitions would be over in one-two years. End Summary.

Clear Deadlines Necessary

¶2. (C) After President Voronin's early-morning meeting with EUR DAS David Kramer, Ambassador Kirby, and EUR/RPM Deputy Director Jennifer Laurendeau (ref A), Minister for Reintegration Vasile Sova was briefed by President Voronin's Political Advisor Marc Tkaciuk about the meeting and the USG's three-point CFE plan which Kramer had presented. Sova's mid-afternoon response thus reflected the results of preliminary GOM consultations on this proposal. Several times Sova used the expression "we think," indicating that the suggestions he articulated, which are reported below, reflected consideration and input from Tkaciuk.

¶3. (C) Minister Sova welcomed Kramer's proposals, supporting the joint goals of settling Transnistria and keeping Russia in CFE. However, he said the plan required that clear terms of reference be set. Sova suggested that the time period for transference from peacekeeping forces to civilian observers should be limited to one year. OSCE observers could monitor the demilitarization process and winding down of the peacekeeping forces, but the mandate of those civilian observers should not last for over one year. (Comment: When pressed by DAS Kramer on the time limit, Sova expressed flexibility. End Comment.)

¶4. (C) Sova suggested that the civilian mission monitoring the shutdown of peacekeeping forces should not include Russians and Ukrainians, since they were in those forces. Kramer responded that he would hesitate to accept that suggestion, arguing that the Ukrainians could play a very important and useful role. In Brussels, Deputy Foreign Minister Veselovsky had offered as many as 500 Ukrainian civilian observers. Though this was more than would be needed, Kramer suggested that Ukrainian participation should not be ruled out. Sova responded that Yanukovich would pursue narrow Ukrainian interests, as Ukraine wanted to snatch Transnistria for itself.

Deadlines needed for Removal of Munitions

15. (C) While fully supporting the idea of ridding Colbasna of all munitions, Sova said that it would not be a good idea for the agreement to limit the options to on-site destruction, as a lot of the material could be removed to Russia. With the understanding that there are 22,000 tons of munitions there, Sova said on-site destruction could take many years, and lead to a lot of foot dragging. Sova suggestion that the first step would have to be sending observers to see what is actually there. In terms of timelines, even destroying a hundred missiles a day could take a hundred years to complete the process. Thus it was critical that the agreement include a guarantee that the process be completed in one-two years.

16. (C) To reinforce the necessity of guaranteed deadlines, Sova narrated his own historical experience. As deputy minister, Sova had spent three years from 1991-1994 carrying out negotiations on withdrawal of munitions. An agreement was signed in 1994 on removal within three years, i.e., by 1997. It is now 2007, and that still has not been carried out. Hence, Sova said he fears the same would happen now, and thus any agreement must include a guarantee of the timeline.

Next Steps on the Proposal Package

17. (C) Sova said he found the proposal's conceptual framework complex, but felt the proposal has practical possibility, as long as the timeframe issue is considered, and the proposal is implemented in as short a period as possible. Kramer underscored that there was a window of opportunity now, as it would get worse if the Russians pulled out of CFE. The ball is now in the Russians' court, and

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Kramer said the U.S. is waiting to hear back from them. The U.S. told Moscow that we would consult with the Moldovans and Georgians as well as other allies.

18. (C) In Moscow, Deputy Foreign Minister Karasin had suggested the possibility of renewing 5 plus 2 talks. Karasin had reiterated the Russian position that direct talks between Transnistria and Moldova could solve the problem. He acknowledged that Voronin and Smirnov would not get together. However, Kramer said, the problem is that when Litskai comes, he claims to lack full negotiating authority. Kramer had told Karasin that the Russians need to urge Transnistria to come to the table ready for serious discussions.

Dual Citizenship Law Could be Impediment to Settlement

19. (C) The Ambassador raised his concerns about the proposal in Parliament prohibiting people with dual citizenship from government jobs. Though this might appear to be directed at people with Romanian citizenship, it would clearly hurt those in Transnistria with Moldovan passports, as well as those with Russian and Ukrainian passports. The bill could thus become an impediment to a Transnistrian settlement. Sova acknowledged that there were discussions on this controversial issue. One suggestion was that it might apply only for people running for office, and then perhaps only that they be required to declare their second citizenship. The issue remains unresolved.

Resolution of Issues with Romania Also Important

110. (C) DAS Kramer said he was planning to go to Romania in a few weeks. He urged signing the border treaty with Romania, and told Sova he had said the same to President Voronin and Foreign Minister Stratan. With respect to the border treaty, everyone in Moldova says it is 95 percent done, and everyone in Romania says it is 95 percent done. Kramer urged finishing that last 5 percent and signing the border treaty.

Kramer had checked with the Romanians, and said that they are not linking the border treaty with the political treaty, and are willing to move ahead independently with signing the border treaty. Sova suggested that Moldova wants the border treaty only in conjunction with the political treaty. Kramer counseled dropping that position, and seizing victory where you can, as having a border treaty would pave the way for reaching a political treaty. Kramer urged not letting one become hostage to the other. Reaching this accord would be good for Moldova's standing with the EU. Sova said he would like to see something signed with the Romanians by the end of the year.

Comment

¶11. (C) Sova's addition of timeframe requirements should be considered as part of Moldova's official response to the proposals effecting Transnistria and Russian continued participation in CFE -- and a reasonable, if not unexpected, request. His own experience of having already negotiated an agreement on withdrawal of Russian munitions that remained unfulfilled speaks to the need for guarantees on any agreement that might be reached in the future.

LINDEN